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Loci Anima Gives A New Soul To 1985s Hemispherical Cinema With Dichroic Façade In Paris

France Architecture News - Apr 01, 2025 - 04:19  1107 Views

Paris and New York-based architecture firm Loci Anima has completed the renovation of 1985s hemispherical cinema with dichroic façade in the 19th arrondissement of Paris, within Parc de la Villette, France.

In December 2024, the architectural firm Loci Anima, led by Françoise Raynaud, completed the renovation of La Géode and its hemispherical cinema (originally designed by Adrien Fainsilber) for Universcience (the owner) and Pathé Cinémas (the concessionaire).

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The IMAX screen already provided an immersive experience, but now the entire cinema has been transformed into a fully immersive environment. Before they even step inside, the two-toned façade beckons guests into a world of illusion, where sunlight appears to cascade through a coffered ceiling.



Image courtesy of Loci Anima

This façade reflects the aesthetics of modern stained glass, engaging with light and reflections. Its unrefined, geometric design conjures a monolithic stained-glass effect, where transparency and color merge effortlessly with architectural precision—an homage to the cinema itself.

The renovation was designed by Loci Anima as a multisensory experience that engages both sight and taste. Beyond the confectionery area, architecture and illusion intertwine to immerse visitors in a delectable dreamlike realm, guiding them into a spacious circular environment filled with light and shadows.

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La Géode, which was opened by Adrien Fainsilber in 1985 and is a wonder of architecture and technology, has an interior that showcases a concrete structure shaped like an upside-down mushroom. This is propped up by a central column with an area of only 4 square meters.



The inclusion of a platform for the IMAX projector and another to fill the hall's pit had to adhere to this fragile structural equilibrium, which appears to challenge gravity.

The addition of Loci anima has amplified the display of this brutalist work of art – in a spiritual sense, a concrete cathedral – by removing all traditional elements of cinema.. Actually, the show has already started.



Image courtesy of Loci Anima

Visitors are invited to explore the area by means of a 360° projected image on the walls, which again emphasizes the architectural heritage through illumination.

Two panoramic lifts and an 11-meter floating staircase traverse the building, connecting the hall to the auditorium entrance. A foyer provides visitors the opportunity to examine the spherical structure at close range. This is not for the faint-hearted.

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The auditorium now features a new hemispherical screen measuring 1,000 square meters, tailored for a new 4K laser projector and paired with an IMAX 6.0 sound system.



The seating capacity has been decreased from 400 to 286 specially designed seats, which provide six different reclining angles for improved spectator comfort.

However, before the screening even begins, visitors embark on a virtual discovery of Parc de La Villette, as the geodesic dome itself becomes a window to the outside world—one last illusion to enrich the journey.



Image courtesy of Loci Anima

The interior refurbishment of La Géode establishes a flawless union between structural materials and virtual imagery, incorporating video mapping and spatialized sound, all the way to the return to reality.

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Image courtesy of Loci Anima

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Structural plans, floors created

Loci Anima, founded by Françoise Raynaud in 2005, is a studio specializing in architecture, design, and urban planning. The studio, directed by Jonathan Thornhill and housing 25 architects, is located near the Sacré-Coeur in Montmartre and also has an office in New York.

Project facts

Project name: La Géode

Architect: Loci Anima

Program: Hemispherical and immersive cinema, event space

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Opened: December 2024

Total construction duration: 24 months

Project owner: Pathé Cinémas

Owner: Universcience

Lead Architect: Françoise Raynaud

Project Directors: Xavier Maunoury & Vincent Laplante

Construction Project Director: Halima Temam

Site Assistant: Elie François

Structural Engineering: Khephren Ingénierie

Façade Engineering: Bollinger Grohmann

Fluid Engineering: ALTO Ingénierie

Economist: AXIO

Acoustician: Peutz

Safety Consultant: Studio Fahrenheit

Lighting Designer: 8'18"

Video Mapping & Sound: Moment Factory

Construction Project Coordinator: Batscop

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